



April 2018

Last month

Devon Beekeepers' Day

Unfortunately, due to the snow on Saturday 3 March, Devon Beekeepers Day was cancelled. The draw for the raffle, with the chance to win a beehive, will now go ahead at the rescheduled DBKA AGM meeting on 7th April.

Starting the Season

On Thursday 8th March at St Luke's Church, Plymouth Road, Buckfastleigh, TQ11 0DA Claire Densley from Buckfast Abbey gave us a well informed talk on what we need to be doing right now to get off to a good start for the season (see photos below).



DARG 2018

Investigation into Pollen Diversity in the South West



Some 5 years ago COLOSS developed a project to look at the diversity of pollens collected by bees. It involved beekeepers worldwide collecting samples of pollen on a regular basis and then sorting it into the diverse colours and reporting their findings. The pollen was then stored as it was hoped that microscopic examination would occur but it only occurred on a couple of occasions. Several beekeepers in the South West took part

including the late Kay Thomas, a DARG member who was keen to continue the project when it ceased.

To this end DARG in association with Quantock BKA are promoting a 'Pollen Project' in Devon, Somerset and Dorset to look at pollen diversity in samples collected from honeybee colonies. To take part all that is required is a bee colony in a suitable hive, a Fairweather pollen trap, or similar, and a little time to sort and record samples and compare them with colour charts and local knowledge for identification. Ideally microscopic identification but this takes time and some practice.

Four members of the Totnes & Kingsbridge branch went to the DARG meeting on 17th March 2018. We had been in touch with the chairman, Richard Ball, about using the branch microscope to identify pollen and he invited us to join in one of DARG's projects.

The meeting was well attended by experienced beekeepers from Devon and Somerset. There were interesting reports on past research projects, plans agreed for future projects and discussion of issues such as the use of Asian hornet traps and responding to the Defra consultation document on Tackling Non-native Invasive Species.

We learnt a great deal from the general meeting and from the practical session at the end of the afternoon. We were able to view slides related to the Drone Laying Queens research and were given lots of tips on preparing pollen for microscopic identification.

Our aim is to collect pollen samples from our own apiaries during 2018 and, with the help of the branch microscope and equipment, identify the plants that our bees are foraging on. We hope to compare the pollen brought in by our colonies and see whether the local conditions make a big difference or not. If you are interested in joining us in this project, just let us know.

Kathy Lovegrove, Joe McGuckin, John Harler and Annette Quartly.

This month

DBKA AGM: 9.30am on Saturday 7th April at Meldon Village Hall, Meldon, Okehampton, EX20 4LU

BBKA Spring Convention: Friday 13th April to Sunday 15th April at Harper Adams University, Shropshire.

Beekeeping Beginners Course: 7.00pm on Thursday 19th April at St Luke's Church, Plymouth Road, Buckfastleigh, TQ11 0DA. This session concentrates on the Bees, Plants and Hive Products.

Branch Apiary Open Day: 2.00pm on Sunday 22nd April at Old School Farm, Dartington, Totnes, TQ9 6EB. We have been having a bit of a clear out at the apiary and also getting some new beehives set up. Come along and see what we have been up to as we open up the apiary for the season. Our branch President, Rod Saffery will also demonstrate a hook swarm on one of the apiary hives. Come along and see how it's done. This is a great opportunity to meet and chat with your beekeeping neighbours. Tea and biscuits will be in supply.

Coming Up

Viruses: 7.30pm on Thursday 10th May at St Luke's Church, Plymouth Road, Buckfastleigh, TQ11 0DA. Guest Speaker Martin Hann, SBI, will tell us all we need to know about viruses.

County Show: Thursday 17th May to Saturday 19th May at Westpoint, Exeter. We are planning on putting together a display explaining the differences between wasps and bees. If you would like to help with making the display, or manning the event, please contact Lilah on lilahkillock@btinternet.com Those helping out on the day receive a free pass for the show.

Pollen: Date to be confirmed for June. Guest speaker, Richard Ball will tell us about his pollen research.

Totnes & District Show: Sunday 29th July at Berry Farm, Berry Pomeroy, Totnes, TQ9 6LG. The branch will have a stand at the show.

Kingsbridge Show: Saturday 1st September at Borough Farm, Kingsbridge, TQ9 7QP. The branch will have a stand at the show.

Notices

Asian Hornet

If you are interested in forming a branch Asian Hornet Action Team (AHAT), please contact Joe McGuckin on swbrickworksvcs@aol.com

Community Beekeeping at Buckfast Abbey

Buckfast Abbey will be continuing their beekeeping workshops, they are currently running their 'Beyond Beginners' sessions, which are afternoon sessions for beekeepers who have kept bees for more than a season and who wish to improve their knowledge and skills. Cost is £5.00 per session, with the next date set at 28th April. Full details of this course and other courses can be found on the website www.buckfast.org.uk However, if you would have any questions please contact Clare Densley direct on cdensley@buckfast.org.uk or Mob: 07944 504283.

Hembury Bee Supplies

Agents for the main manufacturers and can supply all your beekeeping needs. Contact John Harler, Outer Finches, Hembury Cock Hill, Buckfast, TQ11 0HN. Please phone or Email before you visit. Tel: 01364 642517. Email: fire221@btinternet.com

Swarm Collectors

It is that time of year when we need to think about swarm collectors for the coming summer. If you would like to register as a swarm collector on the DBKA website and BBKA website, please let Grant know and email him at bees.westlakedevon@gmail.com

In order to register, you need to be a full or partner member of Totnes & Kingsbridge Beekeepers and have passed your Basic Assessment. Your personal contact details will also be posted on the DBKA and BBKA websites.

Branch Committee

President: Rod Saffery, 01803 762532, rodsaffery@gmail.com

Chairman: Graham Brown, 01364 642787, graham.brown@gmx.us

Vice-Chairman: Jeremy Wells, 01364 72180, jeremy.ena@gmail.com

Secretary: Grant Elliott, 01752 894094, bees.westlakedevon@gmail.com

Treasurer: John Harler, 01364 642517, fire221@btinternet.com

Branch Trustee: Grant Elliott, 01752 894094, bees.westlakedevon@gmail.com

Other members of the Committee: Annie Hill, John Hart, Lilah Killock, Joe Mc Guckin, Kevin Gillard, Tammy Skinner

Branch Website

<http://beekeepingsouthdevon.uk/>

<http://www.totnesandkingsbridgebeekeepers.com/>

Need help? Ken Basterfield holds the highest UK bee-keeping qualification, the National Diploma in Beekeeping, and if you feel in need of some instant advice, you can telephone him on 01404 815885. Two of our most experienced beekeepers, John Harler in Buckfast (01364 642517) and Jeremy Wells in South Brent (01364 72180), are happy to be contacted at short notice by any member needing practical help and/or advice.



Totnes & Kingsbridge Beekeepers is a branch of Devon Beekeepers Association
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